

that ancient constitution which once was the boast of our fathers, and is still the blessing of their children. I wish to see the Crown enjoy its prerogative, both Houses of Parliament their equal privileges, and the great body of the nation that unrivalled and hereditary freedom which has been the noble consequence of our finely-balanced scheme of legislative power. Convinced that the reformed religion as by law established in this country is, at the same time, the best guarantee for religious toleration and orthodox purity, I feel it my duty to uphold the rights of our national Church, that illustrious institution to which we are not less indebted for our civil than for our spiritual liberties. Resident in an agricultural county, and deeply interested in the land, I will on all occasions watch with vigilant solicitude over the fortunes of the British farmer, because I sincerely believe that his welfare is the surest and most permanent basis of general prosperity.

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*To tSarah Disraeli.*

MAEDSTONE,

Tuesday. [July 4.]

Last night there was a full meeting, and I think I made the best speech I ever made yet — as well maintained as the Aylesbury one, and more than an hour in length; so to-day I canvassed on *my own* influence. I do not see how we can be defeated, but I have said little about the affair generally, as when one feels assured it is best to be quiet.<sup>1</sup>

Of the speech on this occasion Wyndham Lewis wrote to his wife, ' Disraeli was on his legs more than an hour : he is a splendid orator and astonished the people.' In the matter of political doctrine the speech, followed the lines that have become so familiar to us, and with the exception of an impassioned attack on that 'flagitious statute,' the new

Poor Law, there is nothing in it now that calls for attention. The new Poor Law had been passed by the Whigs in 1834 with the full approval of Peel and Wellington, but though it corrected flagrant abuses, its harshness made it unpopular, and the cruelties that attended its enforcement had for some time been denounced daily in the columns of *The*

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, p. 115.